THIRTEEN’s *American Masters* Documentary *Mel Brooks: Make a Noise* Premieres Nationally Monday, May 20 on PBS

Career-spanning film features never-before-heard stories and new interviews with Brooks, Matthew Broderick, Nathan Lane, Cloris Leachman, Carl Reiner, Joan Rivers, Tracey Ullman, and others

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After 60 years in show business, Mel Brooks has earned more major awards than any other living entertainer; he is one of 14 EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony) winners. Yet, the comedy giant has energetically avoided a documentary profile being made, even issuing an informal gag order on his friends ... until now. Brooks agreed to throw himself into a new documentary about his storied career, giving *American Masters* exclusive interviews and complete access to his film and photo archives. Premiering nationwide Monday, May 20, 2013 at 9 p.m. (ET/PT) on PBS (check local listings), *American Masters Mel Brooks: Make a Noise* features new interviews with Brooks, his friends and colleagues, including Matthew Broderick, Nathan Lane, Cloris Leachman, Joan Rivers, Tracey Ullman, and his close friend, with whom he created *The 2000 Year Old Man* more than 50 years ago, Carl Reiner. A DVD with bonus material will be available Tuesday, May 21 from Shout Factory.
Showcasing the Brooklyn native’s brilliant, skewed originality, *American Masters Mel Brooks: Make a Noise* journeys through Brooks’ early years in the creative beginnings of live television — with Sid Caesar on *Your Show of Shows* — to the film genres he so successfully satirized in *Young Frankenstein, Blazing Saddles, High Anxiety*, and *Spaceballs* — to the groundbreaking Broadway musical version of his first film, *The Producers*. The documentary also delves into his professional and personal ups and downs — his childhood, his first wife and subsequent 41-year marriage to Anne Bancroft — capturing a never-before-heard sense of reflection and confession.

“There are a few singular voices of genius in film comedy; Mel Brooks joins the ranks of Chaplin, Keaton and Woody Allen, creating a genre unto himself,” said Susan Lacy, creator and executive producer of *American Masters*. “This project has been a joy. Mel can make anything funny — he even had me in stitches during a conference call about distribution contracts. His humor is truly instinctive — and constant!”

“When they called me to say I had been chosen as the next ‘American Master,’ I thought they said I was chosen to be the next Dutch Master. So I figured what the hell, at least I’ll get a box of cigars. When I realized my mistake I was both elated and a little disappointed at losing the cigars,” cracked Brooks, who will receive the 41st AFI Life Achievement Award this June.

Summing up his experience making the film, filmmaker Robert Trachtenberg said, “I asked him deep, probing questions for four months, and he got to keep the shirt we bought for him. So I think we both made out pretty well.” Trachtenberg’s past films for *American Masters* include *Cary Grant: A Class Apart* (2005), *Gene Kelly: Anatomy of a Dancer* (2002) and *On Cukor* (2000) about director George Cukor. He’s also the author of the bestseller *When I Knew* (2005) and an award-winning entertainment and fashion photographer.

Since its 1986 premiere, *American Masters* has earned 24 Emmy Awards — including eight for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series since 1999 and five for Outstanding Non-Fiction Special — 12 Peabodys, an Oscar, three Grammys, and two Producers Guild Awards. Now in its 27th season on PBS, the series is a production of THIRTEEN. WNET is the parent company of THIRTEEN and WLIW21, New York’s public television stations, and operator of NJTV. For 50 years, THIRTEEN has been making the most of the rich resources and passionate people of New York and the world, reaching millions of people with on-air and online programming that celebrates arts and culture, offers insightful commentary on the news of the day, explores the worlds of science and nature, and invites students of all ages to have fun while learning.

To take *American Masters* beyond the television broadcast and further explore the themes, stories and personalities of masters past and present, the companion website (http://pbs.org/americanmasters) offers streaming video of select films, interviews, essays, photographs, outtakes, and other resources.

*American Masters Mel Brooks: Make a Noise* is a production of *American Masters* for
THIRTEEN. Robert Trachtenberg is writer, director, producer, and editor. Susan Lacy is *American Masters* series creator and executive producer.

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